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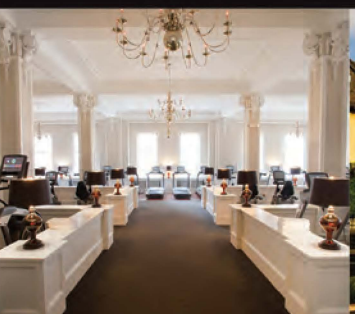

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ON THE COVER
Winter brings a lot of indoor time with it. So make your interiors into a stunning retreat.
Photo of Caruso by miniforms - italy, found exclusively at Rosenthal Interiors.

Preventative Care for Men

Movember is upon us! Tis the season to grow out your 'staches and goatees to raise awareness and funds for men's health issues. It's a good time to be proactive about your health and remind the men in your life to do the same.

Preventative care can make all the difference. Research shows that men who go to the doctor less than women, are more likely to have serious conditions and die five years younger, on average. Health conditions that only affect men, such as prostate cancer and low testosterone, and many major health risks like heart disease, can be prevented and treated with early diagnosis.

Develop a relationship with your doctor and take control of your health with routine assessments to detect problems early. Most preventative services are covered by health insurance.

North Memorial Health providers routinely care for the LGBT population. Our team will treat you and your family with respect and empathy. To review our preventative services and an LGBT wellness guide, visit Better Health News at: northmemorial.com.

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Housekeeping

It's that time of year again when I need to clean out my virtual to-do list and let you know about some of the things that are happening around Lavender Media and our Lavenderland. Housekeeping works well in an issue dedicated to Winter Home & Garden topics. Speaking of this issue, have you noticed we've been including regular articles about senior living? This one is about Universal Design and how to either design or retrofit your home to work for you as you age. We've included more topics for the aging community this year because it is an important facet to pay attention to, particularly because the rainbow community sees a significant number of people go back into the closet as they get older. We need to make an effort to make sure our elders don't suffer erasure in our society, that they don't get lost in the shuffle, so we're trying to do our part.

On the flipside of dedicating more material to the aging segment of our community, we are also going to be featuring more online content for the younger set in our demographic. Look for some changes to happen here at Lavender Media. In addition to the Lavender Magazine that you're either holding in your hands or reading via the internet, we'll be increasing our video and online content to get this community in front of the eyes of more of the younger folks who take their media in shorter, more visual snippets. Okay, as a 40-year old, I also tend to enjoy all sorts of videos on Facebook on my phone as I'm going about my day. So, maybe this is one way for me to still feel like part of the younger set (as I squint and wonder if I need bifocals).

Speaking of videos and online content, Halloween is just around the corner. We're going to be featuring a number of fun Halloween posts on our website, so keep an eye out on social media. And, if you're not into social media, all of our content is always at www.lavendermagazine.com, so check our "Recent Posts" section for anything new. If you've got Halloween events being held in public places, be sure to add them for free to our events calendar so people can know about them. Also, from me to you, please be careful and take care of each other this Halloween season. Be safe and have fun.

I can't believe the year's already this far gone! It's that time of the year for the Lavender Community Awards! Do you know an individual, an organization, or a company that has done great work for the rainbow community in the past year? Take a short amount of time to fill out the information in the form on our website to share the gratitude and recognize the efforts put out by these great people. Be sure to include any contact information possible for the nominee so that the Lavender staff can reach them. Oftentimes, your nominations are the first time we've known of a person and their contributions to this community, so the more you can tell us about them, the more likely it is that we can honor them. Nominations are due by noon on November 4, so go to this link to get yours in on time: http://tiny.cc/lavenderawards

Election Day is November 7. No, it's not a presidential election year that tends to get more voter turnout. But, as we know, each level of public office counts. Get out and vote. Every election day is historic.

Last but not least, congratulations to our WNBA champions, the Minnesota Lynx! You are tremendous coaches, athletes, and ambassadors. Thank you for all you do.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Rules of Thumb, or, When Not to Eat the Berries

Have you ever, walking down the street, turned instinctively at the sound of something a little "off," abashed to discover a person with a limp approaching? It doesn't mean you're cruel, intending to cause embarrassment. I wouldn't stare at such a person walking directly towards me. What I'm describing is instinct picking up something that might indicate danger. Tens of thousands of years went into our ancestors being alert to anything different. Few sabretooths today, but we still spin at the sound of an irregular footstep approaching.

Humankind—those that turned and looked and survived—absorbed these lessons long before they had doctors and psychoanalysts to diagnose. It's still a good rule of thumb to determine what danger a given action or individual might pose. If eating a red berry from a certain bush meant illness or death, the members of your group stopped eating those berries, warned their children, "Danger! Don't eat!"

If you observe a neighborhood child frequently bullying playmates and tormenting animals, you don't need a medical diagnosis from the DSM V of a specific mental illness to determine that that child poses a problem for the local kids and pets. He's dangerous.

This rule of thumb works for adults, and covers social and work areas as well. You don't need refinements and definitions. Mental illness does not, in and of itself, indicate danger. Many, if not most, such individuals can work and pursue life without harming others. Many human traits are shared along a spectrum and may be benign or even helpful. Narcissism, to take but one, is a personality component for many of us, an asset even, especially for those who perform, create, or put themselves in some way into the public view.

The thing to assess is what traits a given person exhibits, how many there are, to what degree they are displayed, and how often. Did the little boy next door accidentally hit your daughter with a rock and was horrified when he cut her cheek, or does he attack children daily with an intent to harm?

Observe, assess, then act to remedy, would be my advice. When to act, and how exactly to cause the problem to stop is the question you need to decide for yourself. ■

My doctor makes me feel ~~dumb.~~ heard.

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"ROAR FOR FOUR" MINNESOTA LYNX WIN 4TH WNBA CHAMPIONSHIP

The Minnesota Lynx won their fourth WNBA championship in seven years when they defeated the Los Angeles Sparks on Oct. 4, 2017, with a score of 85-76.

OCTOBER 4, 2017

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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MINNESOTA LYNX PARADE AND CHAMPIONSHIP CELEBRATION

OCTOBER 5, 2017

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What is TRUVADA for PrEP?

TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a prescription medicine that is used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1. To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must be HIV-negative before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP:**
  - Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months.
  - If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**
  - Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
  - Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
  - Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
  - Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV and stop taking TRUVADA, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.** If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- **Also take** certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.

What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood** (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain, softening, or thinning, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include certain medicines to treat hepatitis C (HCV) infection.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.

I'm passionate, not impulsive.

I know who I am. And I make choices that fit my life.

TRUVADA for PrEP™ is a once-daily prescription medicine that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when taken every day and used together with safer sex practices.

- TRUVADA for PrEP is only for adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex.
- You must be HIV-negative before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP™ (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.** Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you think you were exposed to HIV-1 or have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- See the "How To Further Reduce Your Risk" section for more information.

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA for PrEP is a prescription medicine used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1.

- To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day**, not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- Use TRUVADA for PrEP together with condoms and safer sex practices.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months. You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP" section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- Bone problems.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRUVADA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can pass to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with TRUVADA for PrEP.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.

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Version date: April 2017

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Church & State. Photo by Barbara Brooks

CHURCH & STATE

Through Nov. 12
Highland Park Community Center
1978 Ford Pkwy, St. Paul
(651) 647-4315
www.mnjewishtheatre.org

Minnesota Jewish Theatre consistently produces strong work that challenges the mind and heart. With *Church & State,* by Jason Odell Williams, the acclaimed company grapples with the Second Amendment and the role of religion in government. To be clear, this play was already planned to be staged before the Las Vegas tragedy. Matthew Rein plays a Republican Senator who reveals his thoughts on these controversial issues to a blogger. It makes for quite a firestorm, especially since the character is up for re-election. Miriam Schwarz plays his devout wife and Josh Zwick is his liberal Jewish staffer. Michael Kissin directs the first-rate cast which also includes Kim Kivens.

FINDING NEVERLAND

Oct. 31–Nov. 5
Historic Orpheum Theatre
910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(800) 982-2787
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

You may remember that place named "Neverland" from your childhood because it is from the story of Peter Pan and Wendy. If you saw the 2004 movie with the same title, you know that it is from a part of the life of J. M. Barrie, who wrote *Peter Pan*. Now, for those who were youngsters in the 1960s you may recall that adorably dimpled singer/actor from Disney classics, *The Happiest Millionaire* and *The One and Only Genuine Original Family Band*, John Davidson. Those who are bit younger probably know him from *The Girl With Something Extra* TV series, Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands*, and the national tour of *Wicked*. Well, these days Davidson graces the national tour of the Broadway hit. Hence, *Neverland* may be an especially nostalgic experience on the level of the children's story and of handsome Davidson. Director Diane Paulis (*Pippin*) calls him "an incredible performer that will bring commanding energy to the role of Charles Frohman and a mischievous enthusiasm to Captain James Hook."

Finding Neverland. Photo by Jeremy Daniel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Nov. 10–26
The Cabaret at Camp, 490 Robert St. St. Paul
(800) 838-3006
www.BrownPaperTickets.com

Zenith City Horror in association with Actors Theater of Minnesota gives us the remarkable contemporary musical that forwarded consciousness about transgender experience. This debut touring production has had three years of encore performances in Duluth.

Starring in the title role is Alec Schroeder, who shares, "I had seen an off-Broadway recording of *Hedwig and The Angry Inch* when I was very young; as a bullied gender-fluid child, Hedwig was my hero. I got older, and started to understand the searing pain of a broken heart and what it feels like to be hated instead of seen and accepted as my unique self. Duluth's Underground Theatre gave me the opportunity of a lifetime, and I will forever be grateful. For those 90 minutes on stage, Hedwig is my best friend. I relive my past struggles with identity and love all alongside her each night, and after every show I'm physically and emotionally exhausted. To be able to pay homage to John Cameron Mitchell's original script and vision that made such an impact on my life, and to do it alongside great friends, is a complete honor."

MOBY DICK

Nov. 3–20
Fallout Arts Initiative Co-op Studio 3
2601 2nd Ave. S, Minneapolis
(800) 838-3006
www.theatrecoupdetat.org

Moby Dick by gay novelist Herman Melville looms as a landmark of American literature. Its rich story of the obsessive Captain Ahab and his vengeful quest for the great whale who bit off part of his leg begs for dramatic adaptation. Theatre Coup d'Etat has established a solid reputation for its first-rate productions of major classic plays such as *Miss Julie, Hamlet, The Glass Menagerie, Equus*. Their current production, based on the 1851 milestone book, is eagerly awaited given the Coup's classic track record.

Adapting Playwright-Director James Napoleon Stone says, "We all seek some form of higher power, however it is defined. We pursue it with the ultimate passion and fervor, often clinging white-knuckled to even the mere possibility that we may get close to paydirt. This chase of a higher power, and how consuming the pursuit of it can all be, is in its very act what makes us so unilaterally human. This adaptation is about characters struggling with some representation of love, god, or whatever it is that drives them in their life; the incinerating hunt for love and/or god as the highest truth."

Moby Dick. Photo by Craig James Hostetler

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

Through Nov. 5
Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. Minneapolis
(612) 333-3010
www.theatreintheround.org

The accomplished Allen Hamilton has directed what is perhaps gay master playwright Tennessee Williams's most penetrating examination of homophobia. It is expressed through the eyes of Violet Venable, the mother of a dead gay man. Actress Annette Kurek plays that role and observes, "Violet is a goddess of dysfunction. Her way of dealing with anything and everything falls into the category of the 'abnormal.' She is dealing with the fact that her son is gay. She has lived in a symbiotic relationship with him since she bore him—denying his separateness from her. When he breaks from her, as a middle-aged man, he is unable to control his repressed sexuality without her near to control and satisfy him. On some level, Violet is horribly aware, but unable to admit that he needs more than her delusions and her psychosexual dominance over him. Just as she has been his life, he has been her life. She will not give up the power of her 'creation.' I think that her recent stroke and the circumstances of her son's death have fractured her delusions and she is hell-bent on holding the broken pieces of their unhealthy connection at all costs."

WHO KILLED ARIEL?: A PRINCESS MURDER MYSTERY

Through Nov. 5
Phoenix Theatre, 2605 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis
www.phoenixtheatermpls.org

Smartmouth Comedy Company is using fairytale characters to make a contemporary statement written by Kelliann Kary and Audrey Callerstrom. The subject: being a young woman in our computer-driven era. *Who Killed Ariel?: A Princess Murder Mystery* draws from such archetypes as Rapunzel, Mulan, Cinderella, Tiana, and Belle.

Kary, who has also directed the piece, shares, "At its most basic level, this play is a highly entertaining, female-driven comedy that many people from various backgrounds can enjoy and walk away from happier than when they entered the theater. On a more philosophical level, *Who Killed Ariel?* is about reversing the kind of role models many women between the ages 18 to 35 grew up admiring. We wanted to take female characters that may have been perceived as weak or inferior, empower them, and turn them into success stories."

Who Killed Ariel? is inspired in response to Fourth Wave Feminism which Kary relates "started around 2008. This brand of feminism is set apart from previous waves mostly by social media and using online forums as a way to empower women." ■

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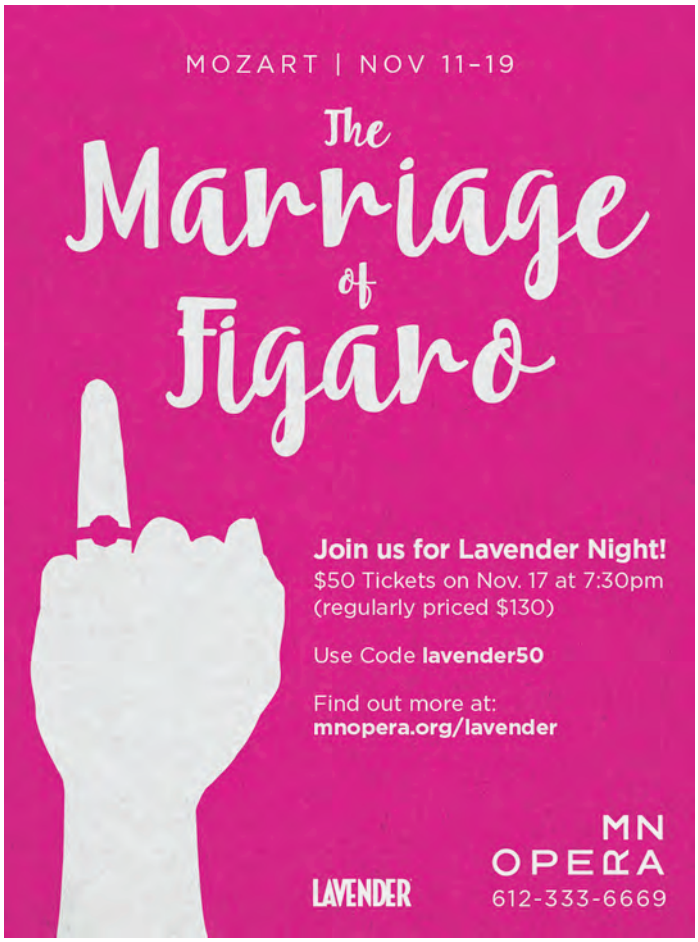
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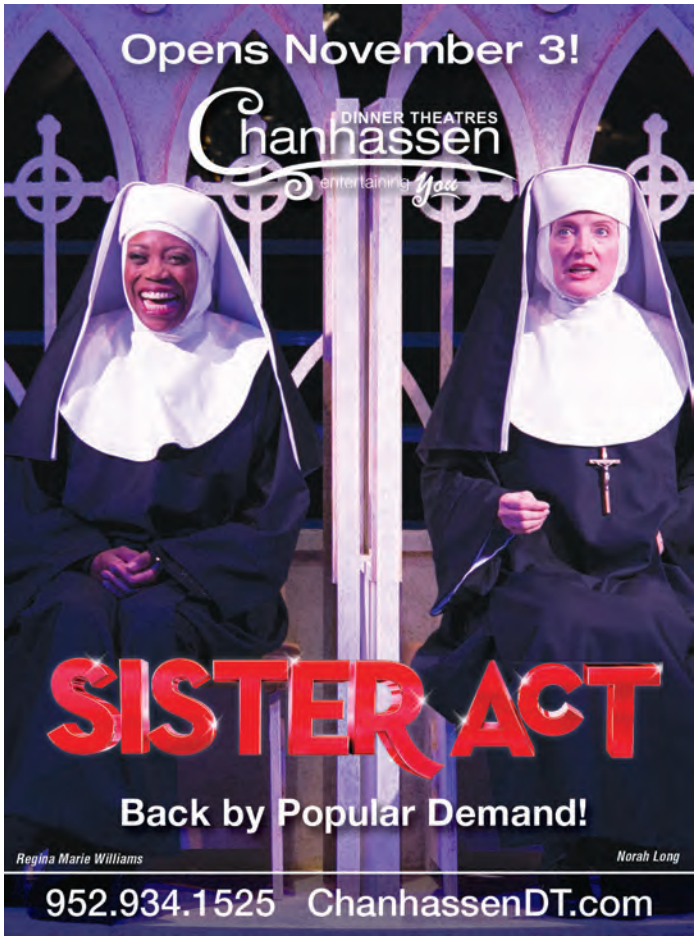
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EVENTS | BY ANDY LIEN

Photos courtesy of Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus

Bingo A-GoGo: Halloween Bingo!

One of my favorite events to attend is Bingo A-GoGo. Getting together with 1000 of my favorite people to raise money while playing bingo with some of our most prized performers is a delight. I got a chance to talk to Jeff Heine of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus about the upcoming Bingo A-GoGo event: Halloween Bingo!

Bingo A-GoGo is back! We didn't see this event this past spring. When is it happening this fall?
You're right, we did not have Bingo A-GoGo in the spring and we traditionally have our Bingo events in the spring and fall each year. We'll be back with "Halloween Bingo" on Saturday, Oct. 28, so it's the perfect excuse to wear your favorite Halloween costume and come out for the fun!

What's the format of Bingo A-GoGo?
Bingo A-GoGo is the most fabulous Bingo event in the Twin Cities, because of our host, Miss Richfield 1981. She calls our games and shares her unique wit and wisdom with our audience. We have the event in the exhibition hall at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis. When we took a break in the spring, we had a chance to really take a look at Bingo A-GoGo and respond to audience feedback that we've been receiving over the years. If you have been coming to Bingo A-GoGo over the years, you are going to see the same outrageous fun but maybe just a bit more fast-paced than before. If you have never been, here's what you can expect. First of all, there are five games of Bingo, each with a great game prize donated by our game sponsors. There will be a costume contest, so be sure to wear your favorite Halloween costume! There's a cash bar and we've upgraded the food options, too. Get there early, because we sell mystery grab bags that always sell out long before the games begin. The doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the games start at 7:00 p.m. Our audiences have been asking for an earlier ending time so we'll be aiming for having you all out the door by 9:00 p.m. so everyone can still head out to other Halloween parties happening that weekend.

And since it is a fundraiser, you will get a chance to learn more about the organizations who will benefit by your generosity.

Who are the beneficiaries of Bingo A-GoGo?
Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus and Clare Housing are the beneficiaries. The Chorus joined the event in 2011 with original beneficiary Park House. When Park House left as one of the beneficiaries, and we invited back the other original beneficiary—Clare Housing—to join us.

What are some of the prizes this time?
We are still pulling together the prizes! Every game sponsor will be bringing their own game prize valued $200. One of the games will have a $1,000 prize. You can also purchase raffle tickets for a variety of raffle prizes. Our friends at Mercy Bar & Dining Room in the Le Meridien Chambers Hotel have donated a fabulous five-course chef's dinner with paired wines valued at $1,000—you will definitely want to try to win that marquee raffle prize!

What sort of people and personalities can I expect to see there?
Miss Richfield 1981 has been our hostess since the first Bingo A-GoGo in 2002 and she will be back to share her unique wit and wisdom with all of us. You can expect to see some of her friends show up, too! Fiant Dental is our presenting sponsor for Bingo A-GoGo, so you can also expect to see Jamie Graham in full costume—he'll be calling one of the games with Miss Richfield 1981! ■

For tickets go to halloweenbingo.eventbrite.com

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NEW WORKS BY BROMSTAD AND BERKUS

BY ANDY LIEN

Two of the hot gay designers in interiors are David Bromstad and Nate Berkus. With very different styles, the two of them can be seen online and in various media outlets as well as in your own home. You can order David Bromstad's art online or shop at Target and other stores for Nate Berkus' pieces to redecorate or accent your surroundings.

Pucker Up! Mural

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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NATE BERKUS AT TARGET

The latest collection by Nate Berkus at Target (www.target.com) has pieces that range from softlines like bedding and occasional chairs, rugs and curtains, to hardlines like nightstands, tables, and lamps. Here are a few of my favorites, with strong geometric and modern lines. And a spiffy stapler. Because obviously.

Find more of their designs and products at www.davidbromstad.com and www.nateberkus.com.

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WINTER TRENDS WITH ROSENTHAL INTERIORS

BY JOSHUA ADELMAN

Rosenthal Interiors has been the premier destination for stylish, contemporary furnishings and unparalleled professional design services since 1895. A family-owned business, Rosenthal's continuously strives to create a unique and inspiring destination in the heart of Downtown Minneapolis.

Rosie Rosenthal, fourth-generation owner and president of Rosenthal Interiors, loves to find what's new, imaginative, and what will be timeless for years to come. Immersing herself in furnishing markets globally, from Milan to High Point, she sources exclusive and never-before-seen designs and styles to bring to the Twin Cities—giving you the impression of attending international furnishing fairs, but from the comfort of the downtown Minneapolis showroom.

Rosenthal's also offers full-service interior design, as it is not just a *want* of their clients, it's a *need*. They have expanded their services, cultivated a wealth of knowledge, brought on new team members and talent—so now they may assist you in creating the perfect space, designing it from the ground up, with your every need in mind. They take care of the leg work, all you have to do is enjoy your new space. From custom globally sourced fabric for pillows, window coverings, or your new lounge chair, to originally produced art that's created to match your personal flair, custom tile selections, and everything in-between.

Making the push to experience something new today. Be unique, be inspired, be you.

WINTER TRENDS

Wading through what is timeless and what is a trend can be difficult at times, that's why the experts at Rosenthal's are there to help with key style aspects of your interior design.

Pantone, the authority and influence on color, designated 2017 "the year of greenery," further expounding that "[this gives us the] reassurance we yearn for amid a tumultuous social and political environment." With this said, rich greens, with yellowish hues can be expertly blended into your home with accents, rugs, or pillows. Iin need of theme ideation? The design experts at Rosenthal Interiors are there to help.

And if you wait long enough, the familiar returns, marrying spaces—vintage to contemporary—whether it be with an heirloom piece or something brighter and bolder. Merging styles together is easy with the right help, by creating a vintage blend with clean contemporary lines, it will give you an effortlessly comfortable look, just in time for this holiday season.

As we shift to brisker weather and dare we say snow in the forecast, we begin to see a transition to heavier fabrics, throws, pillows, and chairs to create that warm and fuzzy feeling we vie for during the midwest's state of hibernation.

MINIFORMS – CARUSO SOUNDBAR

Miniforms is different. As designers they set themselves apart by creating pieces that intrigue, compel, and inspire wonder. A signature piece, the Caruso music cabinet was designed with all of the aforementioned factors in mind. It is a beautiful blend between sound, design, and function. Caruso will fill your room with the sumptuous sound of your favorite music, or can accent your living space with a modern flair.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 →

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KENNETH COBONPUE – ACROBAT LIGHT FIXTURE

Designed by Kenneth Cobonpue, a multi-awarded furniture designer and manufacturer from Cebu, Philippines. Selected for esteemed awards such as Designer of the Year and First Virtuoso by *TIME* Magazine, Kenneth continues to innovate and inspire with his other-worldly designs. The piece featured, Acrobat, captures a spontaneous moment of an aerialist in mid-flight. Made of gossamer wires, hand-woven in a lattice pattern, this dramatic design is both an art piece and a functional lamp.

NAOS – QUESAR EXPANSION TABLE

The strength of Italian dining and occasional tables have hit hard with the increasing natural palettes of family-friendly ceramic-glass tops. There are more expansion options and base options, to distinguish between households opting for formal dining, dinette, and everyday kitchen use— with choices ranging from a high-gloss finish to a matte texture. Shown here, the Naos Quesar expansion table comes in a number of finish options, sure to meet your specific needs and style.

THAYER COGGIN – FUZZY CHAIR

Thayer Coggin has carved out a standalone identity in the home furnishings market through a commitment to timeless, modern design. In a process unique in the home furnishings industry, Thayer Coggin furniture is benchmade by a single craftsperson. This extraordinary technique ensures continuity among pieces and guarantees the highest quality upholstery that our clients demand. Featured here, the Good Egg Swivel Chair is a standalone accent piece that inspires creativity at every turn or swivel. With hundreds of upholstery, fabric, and leather options and combinations, your space will truly reflect your personal style. True to trends of the coming season our team selected a fluffy white faux fur which covers every curve of our chair, creating a sumptuous and relaxing fit for our clients.

LOCALLY PRODUCED FINE ART

At Rosenthal Interiors we are committed to building a stronger connection to, and network within, our local artist community. To further cultivate this relationship we have with our local talent, we are committing ourselves to only showcasing and displaying local art.

Sandra Felemovicius is inspired by her culture and the outer tangible world to create abstractions. Sandra may get inspired by a fragment of a rock or a wall that catches her eye, or elements as simple as forms, shapes, and lines that then transfer into her work. Sandra's process of creating a painting comes from her background, a Jewish Mexican Artist, integrating her past and present cultures. Always starting with a small sketch that then is later transferred into a full-scale painting, she builds layers of color and many thin layers of transparent paint to be able to achieve these effects. ■

Find design ideas, inspiration, these items and more at Rosenthal Interiors: www.rosenthalfurniture.com.

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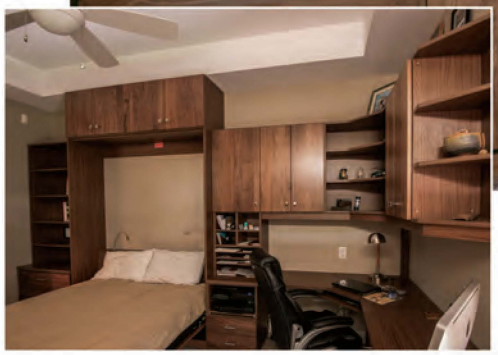

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Photos by VIP360 Dean Readel

THE PLUSES OF THE MIINUS KITCHEN

BY KASSIDY TARALA

Let's be real, there are very few places that feel as much like home as our kitchens. It's where we refuel after a long day, pour pots of highly caffeinated coffee down our throats on an early morning, pretend we're contestants on Food Network's *Chopped*, and spend restless nights rummaging through the fridge for a late-night snack. Our kitchens are the most important rooms in our homes because they arguably *are* our homes.

The folks at Puustelli USA understand how important our kitchens are to us, which is why they work endlessly to design the perfect kitchen for each and every one of their clients. Puustelli is known for its popular miinus kitchen, which is much more sustainable than the typical kitchen. "The Miinus kitchen concept is truly a kitchen re-invented in an important effort to support sustainable living. Miinus is built differently from start-to-finish," says co-owner Anna Joula. "We've established data-driven ecological production methods and chosen the most ecological, healthy and sustainable materials to ensure our kitchens are safe for individuals and the environment."

The Scandinavian kitchen company typically begins the design process with a client meeting in their showroom, followed by an in-home design consultation. This way they can design the most suitable kitchen for their client based on the existing layout, future wants and needs, what currently is and is not working in the space, and the client's budget. "After your approval, we then begin the process of creating an amazing space with your budget in mind. Once we finalize design decisions, we create a contract and scope of work specifications tailored to your project," Joula says.

After seeing great success in Finland, Puustelli recently decided to open its doors to clients in the United States, beginning with Uptown Minneapolis. "We had been looking for a perfect showroom location for our company since coming over from Finland in 2016. In the early spring of 2017, we found this amazing location. Uptown has an artistic feel and vibe, beautiful Lake Calhoun is only two blocks away, and we are immensely proud to have the very first Puustelli USA location here," says Joula.

After opening on July 31, 2017, Puustelli's new location has been very well received. Customers get a firsthand look at the sleek, modern Scandinavian designs, a face-to-face interaction with the design team, information about the variety of cabinetry and countertop options available, and a look at the latest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 →

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Miele and Fisher & Paykel appliances. Additionally, Puustelli hosts events that allow clients to get to know the design team and learn how the company works.

"At the special event on October 27th, you can experience a wine tasting and extraordinary food alongside our design team. We will be sharing design trends and before-and-after client case studies. You can also have an opportunity to take part in Nordic food demonstrations and sip on some extraordinary cocktails. We will also be featuring wellness ideas and some of the latest Nordic fashion," she says.

Puustelli takes pride in the diversity of its clients' backgrounds and lifestyles. "At Puustelli USA, home and family life are the core of our values—everyone is welcome. We are all inclusive and broad-minded. Many of our first clients and prospective clients are LGBT community members that found that our company, design team, and overall philosophy align well with their own values," Joula says.

The design team at Puustelli has been noticing some upcoming kitchen design trends that seem to be getting increasingly popular. According to Joula, their Scandinavian dish drying cabinet is making its way into many clients' kitchens. Also, their sleek, minimal, and maintenance-free ceramic countertops are one of their most unique—and most popular—items.

However popular they might be in the kitchen, Puustelli can also help with some design aspects of other rooms throughout the house. " Our cabinetry systems are not only for the kitchen. We see more and more cabinetry in other areas of the home. Incorporating our cabinetry solutions into the way you live is our mission. Our cabinetry systems can perfectly suit any area in your home including laundry rooms, closets, mudrooms, home offices and bars, and display cabinetry," says Joula.

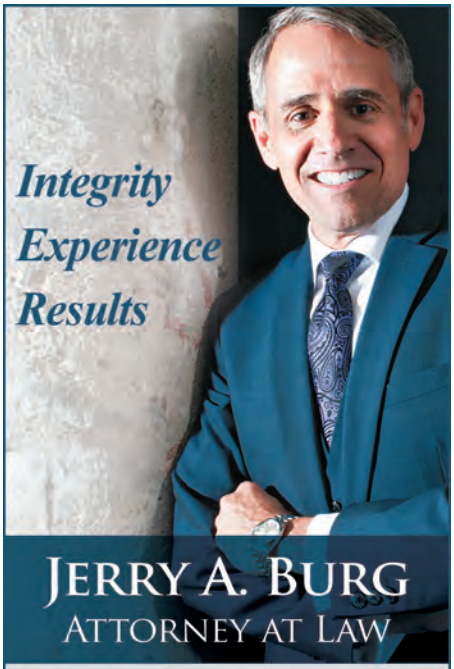
While the kitchen design process can seem a little intimidating at first, Joula wants all of Puustelli's customers to know that they're not alone. "Take advantage of our experienced and professional design team. We offer a complimentary in-home design consultation to each and every client, and we love to come and see your home and the way you are living in it. This is simply the best way to get started in your design process," she says.

Whether you're just moving in to a new house or ready to refurbish your permanent home, the Puustelli design team is always prepared to help. "Every season is perfect for the kitchen design process. There's no better time than the present," Joula advises.

Your home is your home because of your kitchen—the space you go to try a new recipe, the safe haven where you take comfort in trying your best Bobby Flay impression, and the room stocked with all of your favorite breakfast, dinner, and midnight snacks. Your kitchen turns your house into a home, but Puustelli is responsible for transforming your kitchen from a room into a retreat. ■

Visit Puustelli's Uptown showroom at 1624 W Lake St., Minneapolis MN, 55408 or call them at 612-405-2227 to learn more. There is a special on Oct. 27 as well as regular hours on Mondays from 12-5 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, go to www.puustelliusa.com.

Photos by VIP360 Dean Readel



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INDIVIDUAL HOMES, UNIVERSAL DESIGNS

BY KASSIDY TARALA

Housing is inevitably stress-inducing for everyone involved. Whether you're a college student trying to find an apartment that is both affordable and conveniently located or an established professional looking for a new house to start a family, housing can be tricky—and stressful—to navigate. It seems that with all of the new technology and numerous budding housing options, this complicated industry repeatedly forgets its most loyal residents: the seniors.

It's become somewhat of a universal assumption that when we get to a certain age, we'll move out of our long-lived-in homes and into a nursing home or hospital of sorts. After all of the years, renovations, and work put into our homes, why would we want to leave? With universal design, we can enjoy our homes—our safe havens—as long as we'd like, or can.

Universally designed homes are usable by everyone without the need for an adaptation or adjustment, regardless of age or ability of the inhabitants. Universal design allows seniors to easily and safely continue to live in their homes with the use of various features including wide doorways, heightened toilet seats, non-skid bathroom tile, no-step front doors, and double handrails on staircases.

WIDE DOORWAYS

The use of wide doorways a simple fix to a number of problems residents might face throughout their lifetime. Owning a home with wide doorways can be beneficial throughout all stages of life. Whether you have to move strollers in and out of the house to take the kids for a walk, own a large dog, deal with an injury that inhibits your mobility, or use a walker/wheelchair, wide doorways are suitable for all walks of life. Although a simple feature of universal design, wide doorways are undoubtedly a game changer, especially for senior residents.

HEIGHTENED TOILET SEATS

This is such a small, unnoticeable feature that it's surprising it isn't more common in traditionally designed houses. Raised toilet seats cater to the needs of senior residents who might face struggles walking and sitting, either temporarily or permanently. Heightened toilet seats allow residents to safely use the bathroom without assistance. Typical toilet seats are so low that seniors frequently face injuries slipping off or falling down. With a heightened toilet seat, seniors can feel comfortable using the restroom and not worrying about potential injuries.

NON-SKID BATHROOM TILE

This universal design feature goes along with the previous one. The bathroom is one of the unsafest rooms for seniors. From tall bathtubs to low toilet seats to slippery floors, senior residents face a number of potential injuries in the bathroom. With non-skid bathroom tile, seniors can avoid a number of these accidents. Traditional bathroom tile isn't just incredibly dangerous when it's wet, but it can be very slippery when it's dry, too. This hazardous tile can cause seniors to lose balance, with a painful fall on the solid ground. Non-skid bathroom tile allows seniors to feel safe in the bathroom, whether they're stepping out of the shower or using the bathroom in the middle of the night.

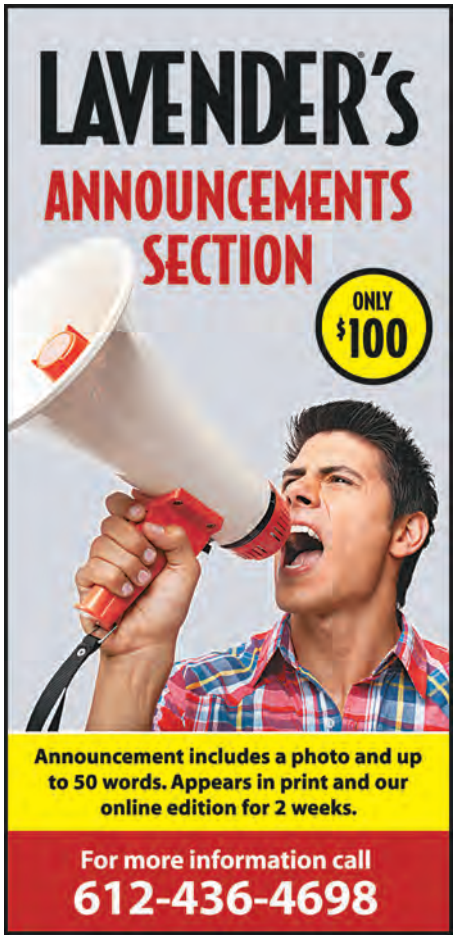
NO-STEP FRONT DOORS

Sometimes the injuries begin before seniors even enter the house. Front porches with steps can cause accidents for seniors because many front steps lack effective handrails. Also, in the winter months, front porches and steps can get icy and incredibly dangerous to climb while maintaining balance. With no-step front doors, residents can easily enter the home without having to risk it on a small flight of steps. Also, residents with walkers and wheelchairs have access to their homes without having to install a ramp. Like the wide doorways, no-step front doors are convenient for residents throughout their entire lives. Whether you're pushing a stroller or a wheelchair, no-step front doors take away the stress of entering your home.

DOUBLE HANDRAILS ON STAIRCASES

While most staircases have a handrail on one side, it's sometimes not enough for seniors using the stairs. Universal design offers double handrails for staircases, which help keep senior residents balanced when moving from floor to floor throughout the house. If the laundry room is in the basement or the master bedroom is on the second floor, the stairs don't have to be an obstacle for senior residents anymore. With a handrail on each side of the staircase, seniors can use both to support their upper body as they step up or down. This can help prevent injuries due to tripping or falling down a long set of stairs.

Our homes are our happy places, so why would we want to abandon them as we age? Universal design keeps residents of all ages in mind, so whether you're just looking for your first home or enjoying your peaceful years of retirement, you can be comfortable and confident with staying in your beloved home. ■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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2017 Volvo V90 Cross Country

When I was a kid, the station wagon was a status symbol among families.

Having a station wagon meant you had space for the kids, your luggage, and an instant sense of adventure. They did not possess the interior volume of future minivans and SUVs, but the station wagon held the family together—even on long trips to see Mount Rushmore or to the family down in Chicago.

In some neighborhoods, families owned station wagons that were more than equal to others. They not just owned the most luxurious models—leather- or velour-upholstered, woodgrain-appliqued, thirsty machines from Buick, Chrysler, and Mercury. They also owned wagons from more premium imported brands.

For example: Volvo station wagons.

For families looking for a station wagon, a Volvo was a symbol of not just upward mobility, but also these Swedish wagons possessed a reputation for being safe, secure, and sturdy. From the first Duett in 1953 to the popular 700-Series wagons of the 1980s and onward to the just-discontinued XC70, a Volvo wagon offered all of this in a superb package that all families—and, now, enthusiasts—enjoy with all of the utility and capacity in the world.

However, Volvo wagons have been on the small side for years, based on "premium compact" sedans. The big Volvo wagon has been missed. They offered a huge, boxy design with immense capacity and that famous (and optional) rear-facing third-row seat. Families who owned them enjoyed them for hundreds of thousands of miles, and often got a new one to replace the old one. A Volvo station wagon owner—in particular the 700- and 900-Series—was loyal to the core. It was one of the anomalies of automotive enthusiasm that is celebrated today.

We have not had a big Volvo wagon since 1998. That all changed about a year ago. All thanks to an all-new big Volvo wagon.

The 2017 V90 was the return of the big Volvo wagon. Based off of the S90 sedan, the V90 expands the rear area to accommodate a spacious cargo hold. It is not as boxy as its predecessors, but it is aligned with Volvo's present and future course in design and engineering.

For the U.S., we only get the V90 Cross Country series. It is not that the regular V90 models won't sell here. It is sold elsewhere in the world, and you can special order one in this country. It is just that we Americans have this fixation on the SUV and crossover. Therefore, giving the V90 the Cross Country treatment—higher ground clearance, body and underbody protection and so forth—would help the wagon's cause for Volvo in one of its most important markets.

Does this V90 Cross Country give us that same feeling as its predecessors of the 1980s and 1990s?

Let's start with the obvious: there is no direct lineage between the 700-/900-Series wagons of that era. The structure of the current 90-Series is front-wheel-drive biased in contrast to the rear-drive bias of the older, more iconic wagons, which means that perhaps the V90 has more in common with the front-drive-biased wagons that came in the 1990s and continue to be the backbone of Volvo's lineup.

Well, that is somewhat correct. Yet, the V90 stands alone because of its size which is larger than even most premium wagons currently sold in this country.

To add to its size is a ground clearance of 8.3 inches, giving it a lifted appearance for better off-road management. Granted, this is not designed to replace a Jeep Wrangler or Range Rover, but the V90 Cross Country serves as a better "crossover" than most similarly equipped and priced models. This is an important piece to take to heart. Volvo considers the V90 Cross Country wagon as a "crossover-wagon," even with the superb new XC60 and XC90 in its lineup.

Yet, it is based on the S90 sedan. The wheelbase is the same between the two body styles, though the V90 is about an inch shorter. The wagon is also four inches taller than the sedan.

One thing to point out about this handsome wagon, the rear end. Volvo's wagon design philosophy has always been to build "bricks." In the old days, the rear end of every Volvo wagon ended at almost a 90-degree angle. The V90 is more angular; a cross between modern sedan design fused with wagon capacity. It is equally as handsome as the rest of the wagon, especially with its new boomerang taillights that began up the rear pillar and cross the tailgate.

We would be remiss if we did not mention the look and functionality of the "Thor's Hammer" headlamp assembly up front and the special grille treatment denoting the Cross Country over other possible trims of the special order-only V90 wagon. And, that camera through the big Volvo logo up front.

The balance of style translates into a handsome, functional, and luxurious cabin laden with Volvo's latest technology throughout. Like the S90, the cabin is designed for driver control and customization. From the center Sensus screen, there are many functions that will fit with the mood and temper of the driver from the design of the instrumentation to the information needed to be read from the same screen. Controls are great to the touch and logical even without word descriptions. Storage in the center stack is also logical with a place for your mobile phone and three cupholders, all of which can be hidden by a sliding cover. The short gear lever is right for reach and easy to understand and work.

Front seat occupants are treated to large chairs that are firm, but supportive, for any length of drive. You get a solid set of adjustments, including lumbar support. Rear seat room is extraordinary for any size person. Behind the fold-flat rear seats is at least 33.9 cubic feet of cargo space. It expands to create 78.3 inches of cargo length from the front seats rearward. In all, it is a spacious cabin with room for all activities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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At $3,200, a V90 Cross Country customer can choose one of the best audio systems in the business. The Bowers & Wilkins system offers 19 speakers with 1,400 watts of power behind it. Through the Sensus screen, the system offers three different sound environments for everyone, from a concert hall setting to a studio setting. An individual stage setting can be adjusted for sound envelopment and intensity, not to mention it offers Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, along with app playback and the usual radio bands. No matter how you listen to music or get your information, the combination of Sensus and Bowers & Wilkins is worth the extra cost.

A V90 Cross Country customer has a choice of two engines. The T5 Drive-E engine starts with a 2.0-liter turbocharged engine, good for 250 horsepower. Our tester had the T6 upgrade, adding a supercharger to the turbocharged engine. That puts out 316 horsepower without hesitation. There is nominal lag from any boost source, even on passing and highway entrance maneuvers. Connected to our T6 engine is an eight-speed automatic transmission with a very solid all-wheel-drive system.

This engine/transmission/final drive combination is not made for performance or weight/capability, but for efficiency. In the end, we observed a fuel consumption average of 26.6 MPG.

Like all Cross Country wagons of the past, the V90 offers a softer, smoother ride thanks to its higher ground clearance. It means a longer suspension travel, with the assist of the available air suspension in the rear. Larger wheels and tires also help to deal with both highways and dirt tracks, and everything else in-between. Handling and cornering are quite decent, though expect some roll on harder maneuvers. Otherwise, it is quite lithe for a large wagon.

Part of that litheness is the electric steering system. It is very direct and offers a great turning radius and wheel response. Steering weight can be adjusted when selecting the Dynamic driving mode. It offers a more precise on-center feel for great control. Pilot Assist combines two active safety features—Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Keep Assist. Combined, the V90 Cross Country offers aggressive lane holding control, while maintaining highway speed. If you are not used to anything regarding autonomous driving, then you might want to lighten up on the wheel and let the system take care of keeping you safe. But, please keep your hands on the wheel…

The braking system is pretty good, with solid stops in normal and panic situations. It leads to Volvo's Intellisafe suite of active safety features, which includes a front collision warning system with pedestrian detection, along with a 360-degree camera and cross-traffic alert. One does not buy a Volvo without understanding how safe it truly is. That includes trusting the active and passive systems onboard this V90 Cross Country.

Pricing for the V90 Cross Country starts at $52,300 for the T5 version. Our almost fully-loaded T6 model came with a sticker price of $64,640.

The return of the big Volvo wagon is a welcomed one. Yet, the brand's sales figures tell us a different story. SUVs make up 67% of total sales volume for Volvo in this country. Granted, they have some really superb SUVs—namely the latest XC60 and XC90.

The V90 Cross Country is really a great alternative to the SUV, similar to the Subaru Outback, Volkswagen Golf Alltrack, Audi Allroad, and Volvo's own V60 Cross Country. Yet, the larger Volvo offers more than any of these rugged go-anywhere wagons, more in terms of style, capability performance, luxury, comfort, safety, and connectivity. It also has that one intangible that draws us to the V90 Cross Country: its history.

The big Volvo wagon—dating back to the Duett, the Amazon, the 145, the 700- and 900-Series—is alive and well in a package that warrants maximum fun. ■

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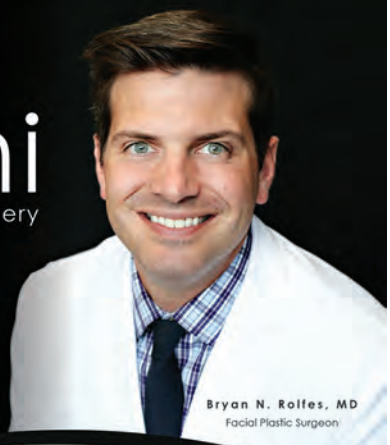

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Sory Sanlé Volta Photo 1965-85
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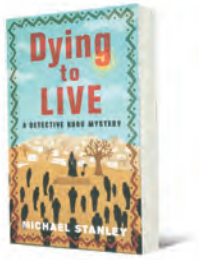
The Burkino Faso photographer opened his portrait studio, Volta Photo, in 1960, and Sory Sanlé soon became known throughout the city. Sanlé, working in black and white with a twin-lens medium format Rolleiflex, documented the cultural scene about him at a key point in time—1960 was the year that his country, then known as République de Haute-Volta, gained its independence from France. His "Autoportrait au Miroir, 1966" shows a lithe, youthful exuberance, while other portraits reveal not only this energy, but an isolation in time and space, reminiscent of old daguerreotypes. In "2CV Bricolée, 1968," a young man stands in his open auto, shadows of heads the only evidence of his admirers. These images draw the viewer in, as the subjects declare, "I am!"

Minnesota Boy: A Memoir
Mark Abramson
Minnesota Boy Press
$15

"Keep on writing." Abramson's mother's voice echoes through this memoir that is at the same time the story of a gay teen growing up and into manhood, his longing for his childhood home, and his leaving to find and create his own. At his mother's urging to write about "that trip you took to Europe when you were right out of high school, playing your saxophone with that band…" He did, and that trip and subsequent peregrinations form this latest chapter in Abramson's Odyssey. No stranger to memoir, Abramson has penned San Francisco life in *For My Brothers, Sex, Drugs and Disco, and More Sex, Drugs and Disco*. A keen, empathetic observer, Abramson conveys the grit and warmth that teemed–and teems–in the Castro.

O Human Star (Vol I & II)
Blue Delliquanti
Blue Delliquanti
$25

Inventor Alistair Sterling ignited the robot revolution, but died suddenly, 16 years ago, without knowing what strange wonders he had spawned. Local author and artist Blue Delliquanti starts her story (there are currently two volumes in print, and the novel continues on ohumanstar.com) as Sterling wakes up with an incision in his chest and scattered images of… what? Escorted to his old partner's home, he learns that he now inhabits a synthetic body, with memories digitized from his mind before his death by…whom? Add to the mix the original love of the older Sterling for his then young assistant Brendan Pinsky, now head of Sterling Inc. Delliquanti's complex plot deepens, but runs seamlessly, exploring what it is to be human—or not.



Dying to Live: A Detective Kubu Mystery
Michael Stanley
Minotaur Books
$26.99

An ancient bushman is found dead, but an autopsy reveals organs of a much younger man. Pathologist McGregor calls in Detective David "Kubu" Bengu. Then the corpse is stolen, and a local witch doctor goes missing. Are these events connected? Kubu works with brilliant Samantha Khama, the department's first female detective, and Ixau, a young bushman constable. Pulling at Kubu's heart and mind is his four-year-old daughter, Nono, whose health is failing. His wife, desperate to heal the child, uncharacteristically beseeches Kubu to try witch doctor's muti on her. The muti material in question will prolong life for an infinite time, but it may be at the root of many deaths. Heart, humanity, and hard-headedness drive Kubu through to the end of this satisfying sixth thriller. ■

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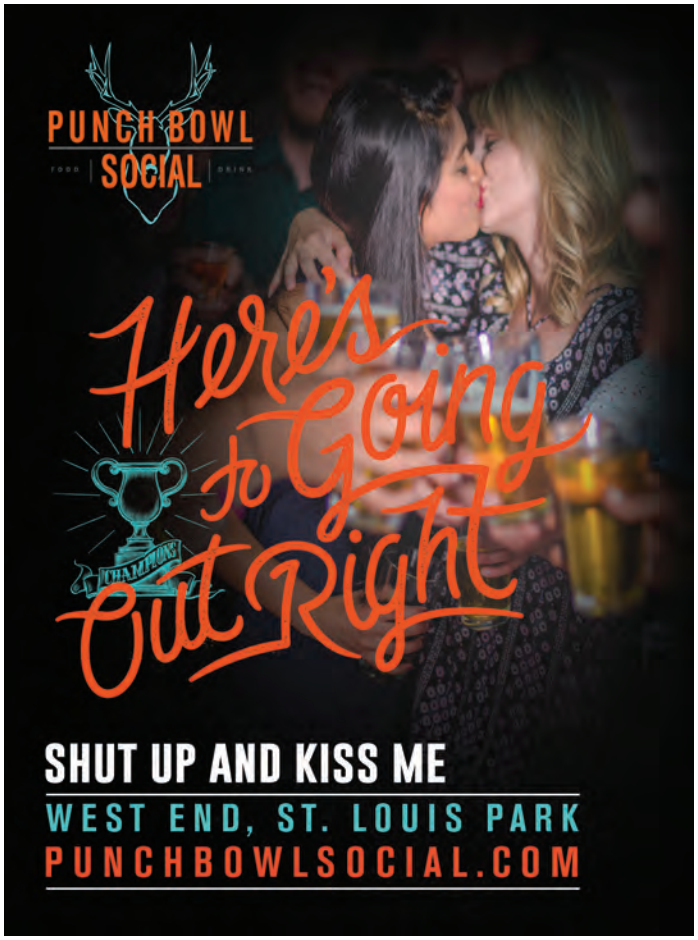
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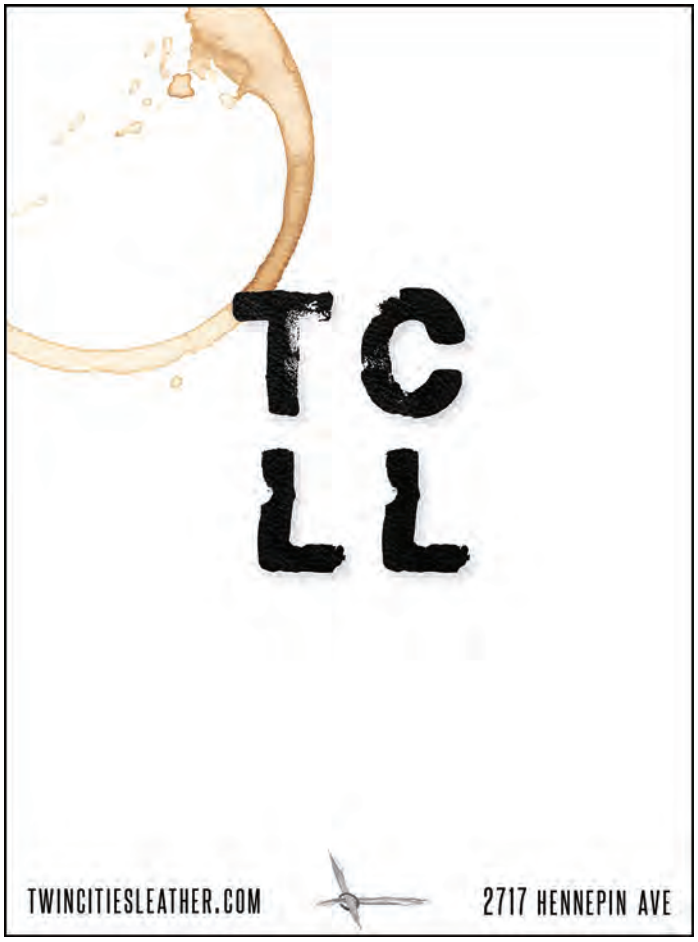
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LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

Speak Up Reach Out: Daniel Peterson, 1991–2017

I just returned home from a fundraiser that was bittersweet in the extreme. It was entertaining, but it also was tinged with a profound sadness. I am writing this while the memories and feelings are still fresh—and somewhat raw.

On the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2017, members of the community gathered at The Saloon for "Speak Up Reach Out," an event to raise contributions to The Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org), a national 24-hour, toll-free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth. But we were not raising donations just because it was a noble thing to do, although it was. We were raising donations for this particular organization because suicide recently had claimed the life of Daniel Peterson, a member of the local leather/BDSM/fetish community.

Daniel Peterson. Photo by Daniel Peterson

I had seen Daniel around but did not really know him well. But there were many people at the fundraiser who did know him well—who had welcomed him into their leather family. Daniel's mother also was there to see the funds being raised, and to see the community processing what had happened to one of their own.

Many community organizations and businesses had lent their name and support to the fundraiser. The evening was cohosted by the Atons of Minneapolis, Imperial Court of Minnesota, Knights of Leather, Minnesota Leather Pride, North Star Gay Rodeo Association, North Star Kennel Club, Twin Cities boys of Leather, Twin Cities girls of Leather, Twin Cities Leather and Latte, and Twin Cities Puppy Pack with support from The Saloon.

The evening began with socializing. Then the performances started, with entertainment provided by the Imperial Court of Minnesota, and members of the audience started showering tips on the various performers. The evening was emceed by Karri Plowman, co-owner of Twin Cities Leather and Latte, and Ida Slapter-Back, Empress XXIV of the Imperial Court of Minnesota. Featured music and dance performers included Ida Slapter-Back, Anastacia Rose, Sarah Holiday, Crystal Balls, L'assy Rabid, Billie LaTease, Ty Torres-Jackson and Evie Blank. Dylan, Minnesota Leather Sir 2017, performed a spoken-word piece. Bootblacking services were provided by Buster.

Funds were raised for The Trevor Project through a beer bust, donations at the door, bootblack tips, entertainer tips, and both silent and live auctions. The live auction item was a custom Minnesota Leather Pride backpatch (a patch to be worn on the back of a leather vest or jacket) to be custom-created by Karri Plowman and provided by Twin Cities Leather & Latte. Bidding for the backpatch was spirited.

But it was the silent auction item, Daniel's own leather shirt, that most profoundly affected me. Daniel's mother had provided the shirt so that it could be auctioned off, thereby letting it stay in the community, and the proceeds from the silent auction could be added to the other funds from the evening donated to The Trevor Project.

Daniel's leather shirt was displayed on a table by the entrance to the fundraiser. Next to the shirt was a photo—the photo shown on this page, which is evidently a selfie—of Daniel wearing the shirt. When I saw the photo, I instantly recognized where it had been taken. And the recognition brought me up short.

Visible in the background of the photo is a very ornate ceiling vault that I recognized as being in one of the ballrooms at the Congress Hotel in Chicago—one of the ballrooms that housed the International Mr. Leather weekend's Leather Market. I, too, had been in that very ballroom last May.

Had Daniel just purchased the shirt, I wondered, and was he memorializing his purchase with a selfie? I thought he looked happy in the photo. I thought he looked proud—proud of his purchase, proud of what he was discovering about himself, proud of what he was becoming.

I'm not sure why seeing that photo hit me so hard, but it did. This shouldn't be happening, I thought to myself. No one should feel so much pain that for them suicide is the only way out. And no one should lose someone dear to them because of such pain.

Yet it keeps happening.

In the end, the final tally came to almost $1,800 donated to The Trevor Project. Sadly, that will not bring Daniel back. But it might help prevent the next Daniel.

Daniel's mother had brought a journal to the fundraiser and asked those attending to write something in it—a story or memory of Daniel, for instance. I wrote a note to Daniel, saying that I was so sorry he felt it was necessary to end his life, that I hoped he had found peace, and that I hoped those he left behind would also find peace in time. And I told him that our community's light burns a little less brightly without him here. ■

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Loving a Son

"Can I ask you a question?"

The inquiry took me by surprise. It came from a heavyset mustached man named "Jim" who had provided tech support for my human inclusivity training session in Norfolk, Virginia earlier that morning. For the two and a half hours that I spoke, Jim hadn't acted all that interested.

Truth be told, I had casually grouped and labeled Jim because of what he looked like—and in doing so, I had done the very thing that I teach other humans not to do. Still, because I firmly believe in showing up when asked, I responded, "Of course."

"I have a 17-year-old son named Mick," Jim started. "Until early summer, he was my daughter Michelle."

These words, too, surprised me. I reacted with, "Congratulations on your new son."

What followed was consistent with what I've heard from other parents of trans kids and teens—that Mick had always been "different;" that in late middle school he had identified as a butch lesbian but within a couple years, his gender identification had become even grayer; and that eventually, what had been "she" now needed to be "he."

"My question," Jim continued, "is whether it would be better for Mick to wait until college to transition genders. He just started his last year of high school with kids he's known ever since grade school; I'd hate for him to lose all those friends because of transitioning. Wouldn't it be better for him to wait until next year when he can claim an entirely new identity with people he'll be meeting for the first time?"

Pronoun proper, it was a good question but a bit misplaced. After all, it was really Mick's decision as to when he wanted to begin living life authentically. If that meant that some friends might not be accepting, I was sure that Mick would deem the sacrifice worth it.

"Oh, I don't know," I said, even though I really did know. "Don't you think it might be even worse transitioning genders as a college freshman since he'll also have to navigate the rigors of starting college?"

Jim made a slight face. "Maybe," he answered.

I asked about how the nuclear family had taken Mick's coming out as male.

"My wife doesn't say very much," Jim replied. "I know that it bothers her but I'm not going to not be supportive of my son just to make her feel better. I also have another son who's good with it all."

From there I heard how despite the shock of Mick's coming out, Jim did all that he could to understand what his son was dealing with. This included reading up on gender dysphoria and researching to find Mick the right therapist—one who had worked with persons struggling with gender identity issues.

Jim's love for his son didn't stop there.

"I know that Mick is going to be challenged, that things will be difficult," he said. "We live in rural Virginia. You know what that can be like."

I nodded.

"So," he continued, "I made it clear to everyone—my wife, my son—that our home would be a safe place for Mick. A sanctuary. A place where he would be accepted regardless…"

As Jim's words trailed off, his eyes became wet. Seeing that trigged my same response.

"You are doing all of the right things," I assured him, trying not to choke up. "Mick is so lucky to have you. Not every parent would be as kind and accepting."

It was true: Jim clearly was doing everything right. It wasn't a given by any stretch, either. On the other side of the spectrum, many parents aren't accepting and sometimes make life so unbearable that the trans child runs away. Or, it can be way worse—suicide attempts or addictions to cope. In one instance, a mother kicked her 15-year-old transgender son down the stairs—all because the son simply wanted to wear a male sports jersey.

Jim and I ended our talk with a hug. "You're doing good," I said. "If you ever need perspective again, just reach out."

With that, Jim turned and walked away. Hopefully, it was with a bit more confidence than before he and I spoke.

Afterward, I thought about the powerful bond between parent and child. I know this firsthand—I would literally do anything for either of my adult daughters regardless of circumstance or cost.

Yet, for the parents of transgender children there's an extra layer—one of loss or grieving that the child or teen they've known from birth suddenly isn't who they believed them to be.

But we're back to love. A parent's love and a bond that should be immutable.

Just as Jim and countless other parents demonstrate it to be every day. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change (2013). *She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.elliekrug.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter, The Ripple. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com*

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QUORUM'S HOLIDAY PARTY

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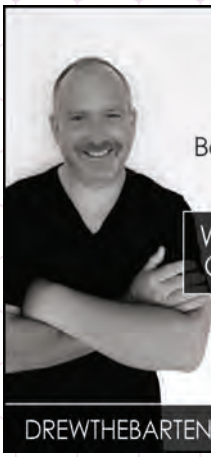
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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Nitpicking

There is a theory that our human ancestors developed the ability to speak while checking each other for lice and other pests. This theory—called Gossiping and Grooming—maintains that speech developed during the countless hours our ancestors spent picking bugs out of each other's hair.

Anyone who has spent several hours getting their hair cut and colored can understand the merits of this theory. Who among us hasn't casually revealed a deep secret to a stylist just to pass the time while they're pawing at your head?

My spouse and I put this theory to the test yesterday during yet another lice panic at her son's middle school. Any time a kid at the school has lice, the school sends a notice to parents to scrub down their kids immediately as a preventative measure.

During the week, when we're working and taking care of the kids, we rarely have time to chat. When we're home, she's in full mom-commander mode—barking orders, performing inspections, sentencing bad behavior with the removal of screen time. On weekdays, I'm lucky if I get a friendly grunt in the morning and evening.

Our main communication during the week is via text. She'll issue one-word dictates, leaving me to fill in the verbs. "Dinner." (Translation: Pick up dinner.) "Dogs." (Translation: The dogs did something naughty/smelly and I need to fix it.) "Emoji of tennis ball." (Translation: I love you. Early in our courtship, she mistakenly sent a tennis ball emoji in response to a love text from me, and it's been our symbol of love ever since.)

Yesterday, I received a text that simply said: "Lice." I immediately started scratching my head for phantom lice and left my office for home.

By the time I got home, the kids had already been treated with the vile lice shampoo, and then dispatched to their dad's house for the night so we could wash every bed sheet and towel in the house. Standard lice prevention protocol.

When I walked in the door, my spouse was waiting for me with a new tool: an electric lice comb designed to detect whether you have any lice or nits on your scalp.

"The procedure takes up to an hour," she said, reading the directions on the box. "I didn't have time to use it on the kids. But let's try it on you and see if it works. If it doesn't find any, you don't have to use the shampoo."

Silently, she grabbed my head and began methodically combing through my hair on a lice hunt. But as my head nestled into her warm bosom and the electric lice comb buzzed across my scalp, all the stress of the workweek and the lice emergency melted away, and we started chatting.

We made vacation plans and speculated on her 17-year-old son's college choices. She told me of some childhood adventures I hadn't heard before, and I revealed that I like to smell the lint that I pull from my belly button. "My secret shame," I confessed.

But mainly we gossiped about the filthy little bastards who keep spreading lice at the school.

"Kids in this town get lice so frequently, I'm beginning to suspect that it's a new attention-seeking trend," I said. "It's bad enough we have to make 12 cakes for a birthday party to accommodate every kids' bizarre dietary restrictions, but this lice nonsense is the worst! Look at that mountain of laundry we have to get through tonight."

"Oh, it's not so bad," she said, gently pulling my head deeper into her bosom. "We should nitpick once a week, whether there's an outbreak or not." ■

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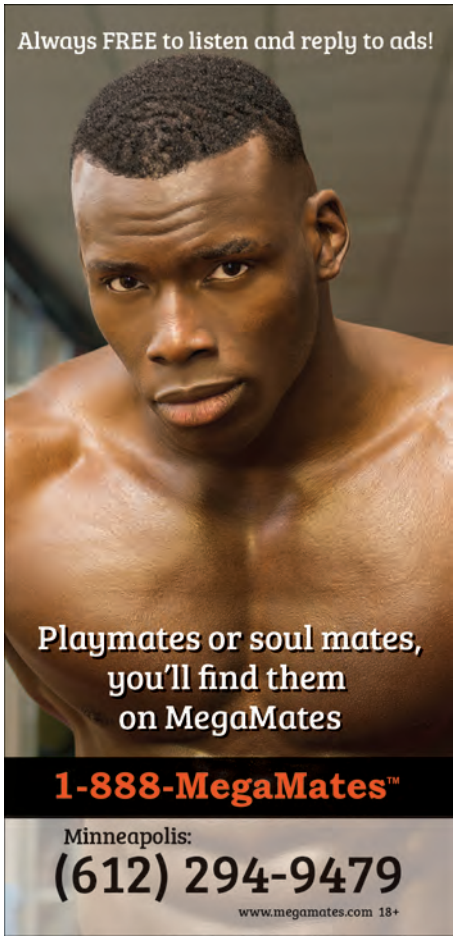

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